Coal mining by private companies

902. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to allow the entry of private companies in the field of coal mining;

(b) whether applications have been received from any private company or companies in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) Government's policy in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO) : (a) to (d) Under the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 as amended on 09.06.1993, an Indian company, both in private and public sector, engaged in power generation, iron and steel manufacturing and such other end-uses as may be notified by the Central Government from time to time can do mining of coal. Cement production was notified as end-use for coal mining on 15.03.1996. Thus companies in private sector have already been allowed captive mining of coal for the notified end-uses.

Under the above policy 57 coal blocks have already been allocated/ decided for allocation for captive mining to various companies in private sector. Moreover, in response to advertisement inviting applications for allocations in respect of 20 coal blocks and 8 lignite blocks about 730 applications have been received from various companies.

Coal-blocks in the country

†903. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of major coal-blocks in the country and their locations, State-wise;

(b) the number of coal-blocks located in Jharkhand;

(c) the total estimated reserve of coal in the country; and

(d) the amount of coal reserves in Jharkhand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO) : (a) and (b) There are a total of 539 coal-blocks in the country as given below:-

†Original notice of question was received in Hindi.

States	Number of Coal-Blocks
West Bengal	45
Orissa	53
Chhattisgarh	81
Madhya Pradesh	78
Maharashtra	84
Andhra Pradesh	20
Jharkhand	178
TOTAL:	539

(c) The total estimated coal reserves in the country is 247.85 billion tonnes. Out of these, 92.96 billion tonnes are in proved category, 117.09 billion tonnes in indicated category and 37.80 billion tonnes in inferred category.

(d) The total estimated coal reserves at Jharkhand is 72.20 billion tonnes. Out of these, 35.42 billion tonnes are in proved category, 30.44 billion tonnes in indicated category and 6.35 billion tonnes in inferred category.

TRAI's concern over broadband connectivity

904. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the TRAI has expressed its concern over the low broadband connectivity in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action/steps taken by the Central Government to address this concern of the TRAI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) to (c) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has recently sent a communication to the Government recommending that Government should conduct a review of various provisions of Broadband Policy and should have reconsiderations on TRAI's earlier recommendations pertaining to Local Loop unbundling and fiscal incentives for Broadband. However, the suggestions made by TRAI are under examination.